

In the Claims:

Claims 1, 25, 31, 39, 45, 61, 67, and 72 are amended herein. Claims 78 and 79 are added. All pending claims and their present status are reproduced below.

1. (Currently amended) A computer based method for providing leads to a sales agent from an electronic lead database to enable the sales agent to contact the lead to determine interest in at least one of a product or a service, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving by the electronic lead database an electronic lead request from a sales agent;  
providing a lead from the electronic lead database to the sales agent in response to the lead request;

receiving by the electronic lead database a lead selection from the sales agent, the lead selection indicating that the sales agent elects to contact the lead;

moving the lead from an active set of the electronic lead database to a selected set of the electronic lead database for a predetermined time period, wherein leads in the selected set cannot be provided to a second sales agent; and

independently from the sales agent, sending an automatic first confirmation message to the lead prior to the sales agent contacting the lead, the first confirmation message for introducing the lead to the sales agent.

2. (Cancelled).
3. (Cancelled).
4. (Cancelled).
5. (Cancelled).
6. (Cancelled).

7. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the lead request includes a lead selection parameter.
8. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the lead includes at least one of the group consisting of contact information and product information.
9. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the sales agent comprises one of the group consisting of a reseller, salesperson, and service provider.
10. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the lead request comprises at least one of the group consisting of a service request and a product request.
11. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
sending a second confirmation message to the sales agent.
12. (Previously presented) The method of claim 11 wherein the first and second confirmation messages are sent via a wide area network.
13. (Previously presented) The method of claim 12 wherein said wide area network is an Internet.
14. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
sending a third confirmation message to an administrator.
15. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of providing further comprises:  
determining whether the lead request is authorized for the sales agent.
16. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of providing further comprises:  
receiving, from the sales agent, a lead selection parameter;

searching the electronic lead database for the lead selection parameter to generate a search result; and

providing the search result to the sales agent.

17. (Previously presented) The method of claim 16 wherein the lead selection parameter comprises one of geographical location and product.
18. (Cancelled).
19. (Cancelled).
20. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
replacing the lead into the active set of the electronic lead database to make the lead available for a second lead request after the predetermined time period has expired.
21. (Previously presented) The method of claim 20 wherein the second lead request is issued by a second sales agent.
22. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
receiving, from the sales agent, a message comprising a result for the lead; and  
storing the result in the electronic lead database.
23. (Previously presented) The method of claim 22 further comprising:  
parsing the message to identify the result.
24. (Previously presented) The method of claim 22 further comprising:  
sending at least one of the group consisting of a result confirmation to the sales agent and  
a result notification to the lead.
25. (Currently amended) A method for requesting a lead by a sales agent, the method comprising the steps of:

sending a lead request to an electronic lead database;  
receiving a lead from the electronic lead database;  
sending a lead selection to the electronic lead database, the lead selection indicating that the sales agent has selected the lead, the sales agent for contacting the lead to determine interest in at least one of a product and a service, wherein the lead in the electronic lead database is moved to a selected set of the electronic lead database for a predetermined time period after sending the lead selection; and independently from the sales agent, sending an automatic first confirmation message to the lead prior to the sales agent contacting the lead, the first confirmation message for introducing the lead to the sales agent.

26. (Previously presented) The method of claim 25 wherein the lead request comprises a service request.
27. (Previously presented) The method of claim 25 further comprising:  
sending a lead selection parameter to the electronic lead database for querying a subset of leads.
28. (Previously presented) The method of claim 25 further comprising:  
processing the selected lead to determine a result for the selected lead.
29. (Previously presented) The method of claim 28 wherein the result comprises one of the group consisting of a sale, a no interest response, an evaluation, and a project.
30. (Previously presented) The method of claim 28 wherein the step of processing the selected lead further comprises:  
identifying the result for the selected lead; and  
sending the result to the electronic lead database for storage of the result.

31. (Currently amended) A system for providing leads from a electronic lead database to enable a sales agent to contact the leads to determine interest in at least one of a product or a service, the system comprising:

a lead unit configured to receive a lead request from a sales agent;

a lead control unit communicatively coupled to the lead unit and configured to provide a lead from the electronic lead database to the sales agent in response to the lead request;

an administrative unit communicatively coupled to the lead control unit and configured to receive a lead selection from the sales agent, the lead selection indicating that the sales agent elects to contact the lead;

a timing unit configured to move the lead from an active set of the electronic lead database to a selected set of the electronic lead database for a predetermined time period; and

an input/output unit communicatively coupled to the administrative unit and configured to transmit an automatic first confirmation message to the lead prior to the sales agent contacting the lead, the input/output unit independent from the sales agent, the first confirmation message for introducing the lead to the sales agent.

32. (Previously presented) The system of claim 31 wherein the administrative unit is further configured to receive, from the sales agent, a lead selection parameter, wherein the lead control unit is further configured to search the lead for the lead selection parameter to generate a search result and to provide the search result to the sales agent.

33. (Previously presented) The system of claim 31 further comprising:  
a reseller control unit communicatively coupled to the lead unit and configured to  
determine whether the lead request is authorized for the sales agent.
34. (Previously presented) The system of claim 31 wherein the administrative control unit is  
further configured to send a second confirmation message to the sales agent.
35. (Cancelled).
36. (Previously presented) The system of claim 31 wherein the timing unit is further  
configured to replace the lead into the active set of the electronic lead database to make the lead  
available for a second lead request after the predetermined time period has expired.
37. (Previously presented) The system of claim 31 further comprising:  
a lead status unit configured to receive, from the sales agent, a message comprising a  
result for the lead and to store the result in the electronic lead database.
38. (Previously presented) The system of claim 37 wherein the result comprises one of the  
group consisting of a sale, a no interest response, an evaluation, and a project.
39. (Currently amended) A computer readable medium comprising:  
program instructions for receiving a lead request from a sales agent;  
program instructions for providing a lead from the electronic lead database to the sales  
agent in response to the lead request the sales agent capable of contacting the lead  
to determine interest in at least one of a product and a service; and  
program instructions for receiving a lead selection from the sales agent, the lead selection  
indicating that the sales agent elects to contact the lead;  
program instructions for moving the lead from an active set of the electronic lead  
database to a selected set of the electronic lead database for a predetermined time

period, wherein leads in the selected set cannot be provided to a second sales agent; and

program instructions for sending independently from the sales agent, an automatic first confirmation message to the lead prior to the sales agent contacting the lead, the first confirmation message for introducing the lead to the sales agent.

40. (Previously presented) The computer readable medium of claim 39 further comprising: program instructions for removing the lead from the electronic lead database to prevent the lead from being provided to a second sales agent.

41. (Cancelled).

42. (Previously presented) The computer readable medium of claim 39 further comprising: program instructions for replacing the lead into the active set of the electronic lead database to make the lead available for a second lead request after the predetermined time period has expired.

43. (Previously presented) The computer readable medium of claim 39 further comprising: program instructions for receiving, from the sales agent, a message comprising a result for the lead; and program instructions for storing the result in the electronic lead database.

44. (Previously presented) The computer readable medium of claim 43 further comprising: program instructions for sending at least one of a result confirmation to the sales agent and a result notification to the lead.

45. (Currently amended) A method for providing leads to a sales agent from a electronic lead database to enable the sales agent to contact the leads to determine interest in at least one of a product or a service, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving by the electronic lead database an electronic lead request from a sales agent;  
providing a lead from the electronic lead database to the sales agent in response to the  
lead request;

independently from the sales agent, sending an automatic first electronic confirmation  
message to the lead prior to the sales agent contacting the lead, the first electronic  
confirmation message for introducing the lead to the sales agent.

46. (Previously presented) The method of claim 45 wherein the lead request includes a lead  
selection parameter.

47. (Previously presented) The method of claim 45 wherein the lead includes at least one of  
contact information and product information.

48. (Previously presented) The method of claim 45 wherein the sales agent comprises one of  
a reseller, a salesperson, and a service provider.

49. (Previously presented) The method of claim 45 wherein the lead request comprises at  
least one of the group consisting of a service request and a product request.

50. (Previously presented) The method of claim 45 wherein the first confirmation message is  
sent via a wide area network.

51. (Previously presented) The method of claim 50 wherein said wide area network is an  
Internet.

52. (Previously presented) The method of claim 45 further comprising:  
sending a second confirmation message to an administrator.

53. (Previously presented) The method of claim 45 wherein the step of providing further  
comprises:

determining whether the lead request is authorized for the sales agent.



54. (Previously presented) The method of claim 45 wherein the step of providing further comprises:

receiving, from the sales agent, a lead selection parameter;

searching the lead for the lead selection parameter to generate a search result; and

providing the search result to the sales agent.

55. (Previously presented) The method of claim 54 wherein the lead selection parameter comprises one of the group consisting of a geographical location and a product.

56. (Previously presented) The method of claim 45 further comprising:

removing the lead from the electronic lead database to prevent the lead from being provided to a second sales agent.

57. (Previously presented) The method of claim 45 further comprising:

providing the lead from the electronic lead database to a second sales agent in response to a second lead request, the second sales agent for contacting the lead to determine interest in at least one of a product and a service; and sending a second electronic confirmation message to the lead, the second electronic confirmation message configured to indicate that the second sales agent has elected to contact the lead.

58. (Previously presented) The method of claim 45 further comprising:

receiving, from the sales agent, a message comprising a result for the lead; and storing the result in the electronic lead database.

59. (Previously presented) The method of claim 58 further comprising:

parsing the message to identify the result.

60. (Previously presented) The method of claim 58 further comprising:

sending at least one of a result confirmation to the sales agent and a result notification to the lead.

61. (Currently amended) A method for requesting a lead by a sales agent to enable the sales agent to contact the lead to determine interest in at least one of a product or a service, the method comprising the steps of:

sending a lead request to an electronic lead database;

receiving a lead from the electronic lead database; and

sending a lead selection to the electronic lead database, the lead selection indicating that the sales agent has selected the lead, wherein in response to sending the lead selection to the electronic lead database and prior to the sales agent contacting the lead, an automatic electronic message is sent to the lead independently from the sales agent for introducing the lead to the sales agent.

62. (Previously presented) The method of claim 61 wherein the lead request comprises a service request.

63. (Previously presented) The method of claim 61 further comprising:

sending a lead selection parameter to the electronic lead database for querying a subset of leads.

64. (Previously presented) The method of claim 61 further comprising:

processing the selected lead to determine a result for the selected lead.

65. (Previously presented) The method of claim 64 wherein the result comprises one of sale, no interest, evaluation, and project.

66. (Previously presented) The method of claim 64 wherein the step of processing the selected lead further comprises:

identifying the result for the selected lead; and

sending the result to the electronic lead database for storage of the result.

67. (Currently amended) A system for providing leads from a electronic lead database to enable a sales agent to contact the leads to determine interest in at least one of a product and a service, the system comprising:

a lead unit configured to receive a lead request from a sales agent;

a lead control unit communicatively coupled to the lead unit and configured to provide a lead from the electronic lead database to the sales agent in response to the lead request;

an administrative unit communicatively coupled to the lead control unit and configured to receive a lead selection from the sales agent, the lead selection indicating that the sales agent elects to contact the lead; and

an input/output-unit coupled to the administrative unit for providing electronic messages to the sales agent and to the lead in response to the administrative unit receiving a lead selection from the sales agent, wherein the input/output unit is configured to transmit an automatic first confirmation message to the lead independently from the sales agent and prior to the sales agent contacting the lead, the first automatic confirmation message for introducing the lead to the sales agent.

68. (Previously presented) The system of claim 67 wherein the administrative unit is further configured to receive, from the sales agent, a lead selection parameter, wherein the lead control unit is further configured to search the lead for the lead selection parameter to generate a search result and to provide the search result to the sales agent.

69. (Previously presented) The system of claim 67 further comprising:  
a reseller control unit communicatively coupled to the lead unit and configured to  
determine whether the lead request is authorized for the sales agent.
70. (Previously presented) The system of claim 67 further comprising:  
a lead status unit configured to receive, from the sales agent, a message comprising a  
result for the lead and to store the result in the electronic lead database.
71. (Previously presented) The system of claim 70 wherein the result comprises one of the  
group consisting of a sale, a no interest response, an evaluation, and a project.
72. (Currently amended) A computer readable medium comprising a computer program for  
providing leads from a electronic lead database to enable a sales agent to contact the leads to  
determine interest in at least one of a product and a service, the computer program comprising:  
program instructions for receiving a lead request from a sales agent;  
program instructions for providing a lead from the electronic lead database to the sales  
agent in response to the lead request;  
program instructions for receiving a lead selection from the sales agent, the lead selection  
indicating that the sales agent elects to contact the lead; and  
program instructions for providing independently from the sales agent an automatic  
electronic message to the lead prior to the sales agent contacting the lead, the  
electronic message for introducing the lead to the sales agent.
73. (Previously presented) The computer readable medium of claim 72 further comprising:  
program instructions for removing the lead from the electronic lead database to prevent  
the lead from being provided to a second sales agent.

74. (Previously presented) The computer readable medium of claim 72 further comprising:  
program instructions for receiving, from the sales agent, a message comprising a result  
for the lead; and  
program instructions for storing the result in the electronic lead database.
75. (Previously presented) The computer readable medium of claim 74 further comprising:  
program instructions for sending at least one of a result confirmation to the sales agent  
and a result notification to the lead.
76. (Previously presented) The method of claim 45, further comprising:  
receiving by the electronic lead database a lead selection from the sales agent, the lead  
selection indicating that the sales agent elects to contact the lead.
77. (Previously presented) The method of claim 45, further comprising:  
sending a second electronic confirmation message to the sales agent.
78. (New) A computer based resell channel management method for providing leads from an  
electronic lead database to a sales agent to enable the sales agent to contact the lead to determine  
interest in at least one of a product or a service, the method comprising the steps of:  
receiving by the electronic lead database an electronic lead request from the sales agent;  
providing a lead from the electronic lead database to the sales agent in response to the  
lead request; and  
sending an automatic inquiry message to the sales agent in response to determining a  
failure by the sales agent to contact the lead after a predetermined lead processing  
time.

79. (New) The computer based method of claim 78, wherein the automatic inquiry message includes a reminder for the sales agent to contact the lead before termination of a lead exclusivity period.